No Straight Roads review
PAGE 9

Student Artwork
PAGE 6

Tutor help
PAGE 4

UAA Mat-Su Home of the Mat-Su College Arctic Dragons

# Mat-Su Monitor

OCTOBER 2020 VOLUME 44 NUMBER 1

## Community Resilience

*By Alex Zivotic*

There have been many changes going on throughout our community due to the current circumstances of Covid-19. While these changes have been less than ideal, our dedication to finding new and innovative ways of living goes to show how resilient we are. One specific area that has been drastically altered since the beginning of this pandemic is the health field. There are many new procedures that have been put into place for the safety of the patients, as well as the staff, and anyone who comes in contact with these people. Sanitation is an even higher priority than it ever has been, masks must be worn (when practical) by staff and patients, temperatures and screenings are being taken prior to hospital visits, there are very strict limitations on visitors, and so much more. All of these adaptations have been made in order to keep our community safe and to let Healthcare facilities continue to serve those in need. As helpful as these new protocols have been, these changes have not been easy on the faculty members and patients alike.

Staff have had to adapt to the sudden changes happening around them almost instantaneously. As with all things, it can be extremely stressful to completely change the way you handle your work duties in such a

*See* **COMMUNITY** *page 11*

## The Importance of Adventure

*By Mariah Eliot*

Photo by Mariah Elliot

I believe adventure is a very important part of life. An adventure can be as small as walking around the neighborhood, going on a scenic drive or it can be as big as standing on the edge of a river just to get the perfect picture, or climbing a seemingly endless mountain. No matter what the adventure is, it is an important part of life because it helps a person discover a lot about themselves as well as about the world. It challenges a person to do things they may have never done before. Adventure can lead a person to some of the incredible views of the world. It helps a person to stop and take the time to discover the true beauty that has always been in the world but at times may seem as if it is not even there. Sometimes those views just may not seem worth the trek. Sometimes we don't have the luxury of having an astonishing view right outside our windows. Sometimes we have to actively look for them. A beautiful view may be at

*See* **ADVENTURE** *page 5*

## Making the Most of It

*By Ricque Antolin*

My Summer was remarkably interesting, to say the least. I don't want to say this article is a rant on what I did during circa 2019-2020 but this is a rant on what I did during 2019-2020. Besides, who wouldn't want to hop onto the bandwagon of sharing your life changes during this epidemic-pandemic- psychedelic-supercalifragilisticexpialidocious experience of quarantine?

I'm typing this article right now at my designated workplace for online classes called my desk. It's sort of been my safe spot for the past Semester: I'll log onto Blackboard and go to my Zoom meeting and at the end of the day when the work is done, I'll log onto Discord to play Among Us with my friends and remind myself that I still love them; Even when they lie to my face saying 'they're not Imposter' when, clearly, I saw them vent. However, before the semester started, I wasn't always at my desk. I was still inside the house, yes, but the difference between now and then is, I was moving around with the reassurance that I could go outside without worrying about forgetting a mask or catching a virus called Miss. Rona. The occasion anyone in my neighborhood would find me outside is when I'm chasing down my dog after he ran away for the tenth time in one week. Usually, when he would run away, I'd stand outside and think 'Stay out there then!' but lately it's been 'Me too.' Why? Because I had been stuck in my house for an entire year only going out for church and grocery shopping. I don't know why I get so passive-aggressive about it because that's how I was living my

*See* **MY SUMMER** *page 10*

## The Love Letter

*By Brandon Traini*

On August 31, 2020 thirty-thousand students, myself included, received a love letter from the University of Alaska. Now normally most people would consider such a letter as an expression of sweet, if not sappy love. This letter, however, would prove to be an expression of pure chaos. The email and attached letter were written by student regent Cachet Garrett. For those not familiar, the position of student regent is one of the most important and critical jobs in the University. In fact, the student regent is a student themselves, and is supposed to represent the interests and concerns of the entire student body, working within the Board of Regents to do so. The position is so prestigious in fact, that the governor themselves handpick the student regent amongst a small pool of qualified applicants.

Upon opening the email and clicking the attached file, I was greeted with an over 4,200 words, document which was the so-called "love letter" written by student regent Garrett. Before I attempt to analyze the letter, let me start by summarizing it the best I can. To put it bluntly, the letter is horrifyingly bizarre. The tone and content of the letter are so out of place that it reads less like the academic quality expected from an important university official, and more like a drunken manifesto. In my honest opinion, this is the type of literary work that would make any English major or professor run for the paper shredder.

*See* **LETTER** *page 10*

INDEX

| | |
|---|---|
| Staff Bios | 2 |
| Student Government | 3 |
| Student Resources | 4 |
| Student Art | 6 |
| Club Corner | 8 |
| Entertainment | 9 |
| From the Students | 11 |

## Procrastination: Happens to Everyone!

*By Angeli Kristovich*

I've never been one to really think twice about doing too much in my life because for the longest time, I wasn't living up to my full potential. So, when I began my college journey about a year and half ago, I wanted to do more than I ever have and see how it goes. It wasn't too hard at first because I wasn't working full time, so most of my time was spent doing college stuff. But now that time has flown by and I have gotten more stuff on my plate, I must say, while trying to juggle classes, a full time job, clubs that I am involved with on campus, a home life, and a puppy, it has been eye opening in the sense that I realized that I have horrible time management!

How did it come to this conclusion, you ask? Well, when I am doing homework, and I feel like I may have gotten a right answer I get so happy that I pick up my phone and start browsing Amazon as if I just finished my

*See* **PROCRASTINATION** *page 10*

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP SOON!

VOTE FOR STUDENT GOVERNMENT OCTOBER 28

Mat-Su College
University of Alaska Anchorage

## Upcoming Events

**October 26:** Spring 2021 schedule available on UA-Online.

**October 27:** Journey Event: The Black Lives Matter Movement in Alaska & Beyond.

**October 28: Student Government election**

**October 30:** Withdrawal deadline.

**November 4:** Journey Event: Mat-Su College Counselor Teaches a Stress Management Tool.

**November 11:** Journey Event: Bringing in the Bystander.

**November 9:** Registration for Spring 2021 opens for students with 90+ credits.

**November 10:** Registration for Spring 2021 opens for students with 60-89 credits.

**November 11:** Registration for Spring 2021 opens for students with 30-59 credits.

**November 12:** Registration for Spring 2021 opens for students with 0-29 credits.

**November 16:** Registration for Spring 2021 opens for students starting Spring 2021.

**November 23:** Registration for Spring 2021 opens for all other students.

**November 25:** No classes, campus open.

**November 26:** No classes, campus closed.

**December 4:** Deadline to apply for fall graduation.

**December 17:** Final grades available in UAOnline.

**For more information on journey events, including times and Zoom links, see https://matsu.alaska.edu/journey/**

## Club meeting times

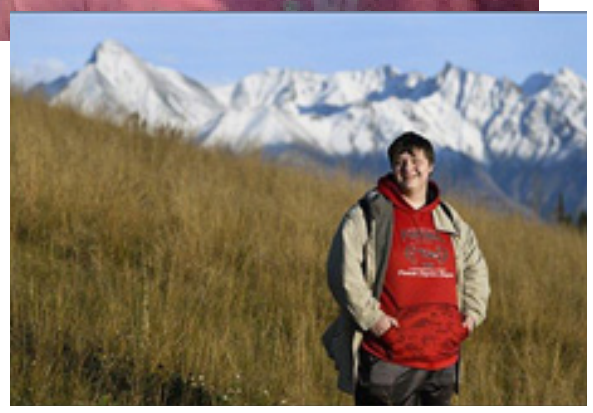
**Student Government Council:** Wednesdays, 12-1: Zoom.

**Mat-Su Monitor:** Thursdays, 2-3 PM: Zoom.

**UAA Anthropology: Thursdays 10: Zoom**

# Meet Ryan

Ryan McCrossin is currently a junior pursuing his bachelor's degree in Accounting. He is also the Mat-Su College Student Government Secretary/Treasurer and this is his third year. He lives in Houston, Alaska and takes care of his mother and his brother. He has two dogs and four parakeets. In his free time, he enjoys listening to music, playing musical instruments, driving (when his car isn't in the shop), spending time with his family, and cooking. This is also his third year on the Monitor as a writer.



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# Dear Audrey

***By Angeli Kristovich***

We all know that the Mat-Su College library is a magical place. There is so much history, beauty, and knowledge all crammed into a small space. That's right, I'm talking about the people who work there. Audrey, Micah, Craig, and Gini are all such wonderful people, and they have been my rock when I needed help finding information for homework or listening to me whine about homework.

I recently found out the library crew has gotten a little smaller, though. Audrey "momma bear" Badger has left her home of nine years in the library and moved to student services. In a way I'm sad, but I'm also happy for her. I have worked in Student Services before and that job is so fun! It is the first stop for a college student, so it is extremely important for the new students to encounter someone who is happy to help and answer questions because we all know how scary it is when you first start college!

If I was a new student, I would be so thankful to get help from Audrey. She is literally the nicest person you will ever meet. It sucks though, because before COVID-19 happened, I would talk to her and sometimes get a hug. Hugs are so awesome, and she gives the best ones! Her hugs are like a perfect blend of mommy, grandma, best friend, safety, and Christmas time all in one. That's exactly what it's like. She has the best sense of humor, and she's super-duper smart!

I will miss seeing Audrey in the library but luckily, I only have to walk down the hallway to see her. However, it will be different because Micah won't be nearby when I'm talking to her, which will be really different because we are like the three amigos, and we work well together when we are trying to work out my life's problems together. Good thing Audrey is also going to continue working with the Mat-Su Monitor too. Because if she left the library AND stopped working with the Mat-Su Monitor, then I would cry.

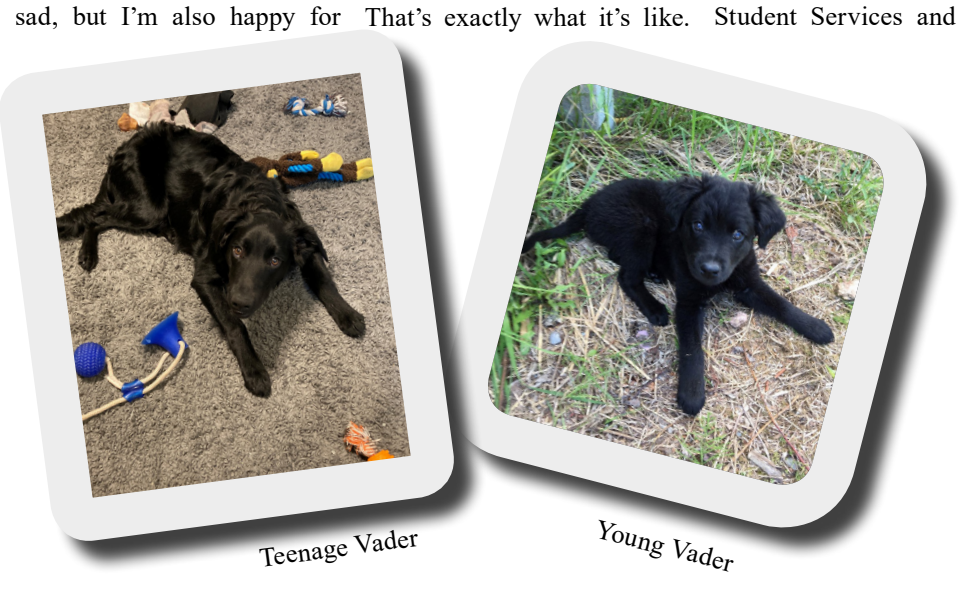
So, if you are new, go to Student Services and say hi

to Audrey. It will literally make your day. In fact, all the people who work in Student Services are the nicest people ever! Then after that, go say Hi to Micah, you will not regret meeting these people! Then go to a Mat-Su monitor meeting and meet me because I'm cool too! We can all be happy and merry and you can see why I felt it necessary to write about how great these people are! Mat-Su College is the best!

**Left: Angeli Kristovich, Shane O'Quinn (behind) and Audrey Badger prepare for the Day of the Dead Dance 2019. Photo by Micah.**

**Right: Micah dressed up for Jo Didiano's retirement party 2019.**

**below: Korry Dunham enforces social distancing at the dance. Photo by Micah Muer.**



Teenage Vader

Young Vader

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uaa_mscstudentgov@alaska.edu
or call (907) 745-9759

# Student Government in 2020

## What happens when the community campus becomes the stay-at-home campus?

***By Ryan McCrossin***

This 2020-2021 school year will be my third year as both a student and Student Government Secretary/Treasurer for the Mat-Su College. I have been involved with student government since my middle school years, as I was interested in being involved with school. I've had a very fun time being in this position and was ready to embrace new challenges the position opened myself up for. I went to Juneau, I've spoken with you all who've come from out of state and out of country, I've been an advocate for student clubs (being in 4 of them at once sometimes haha), and it's been nothing but great for me. Each year brings new surprises to the table as far as events, politics, and faces. I still remember leaving the Student Government office back in March of this year expecting to log back onto my computer a week later. We were planning on going to Juneau that academic year and we were talking about having at least one more big event before semesters' end. It would have occurred if not for the announcement that Spring Break 2020 is going to last indefinitely… SURPRISE!

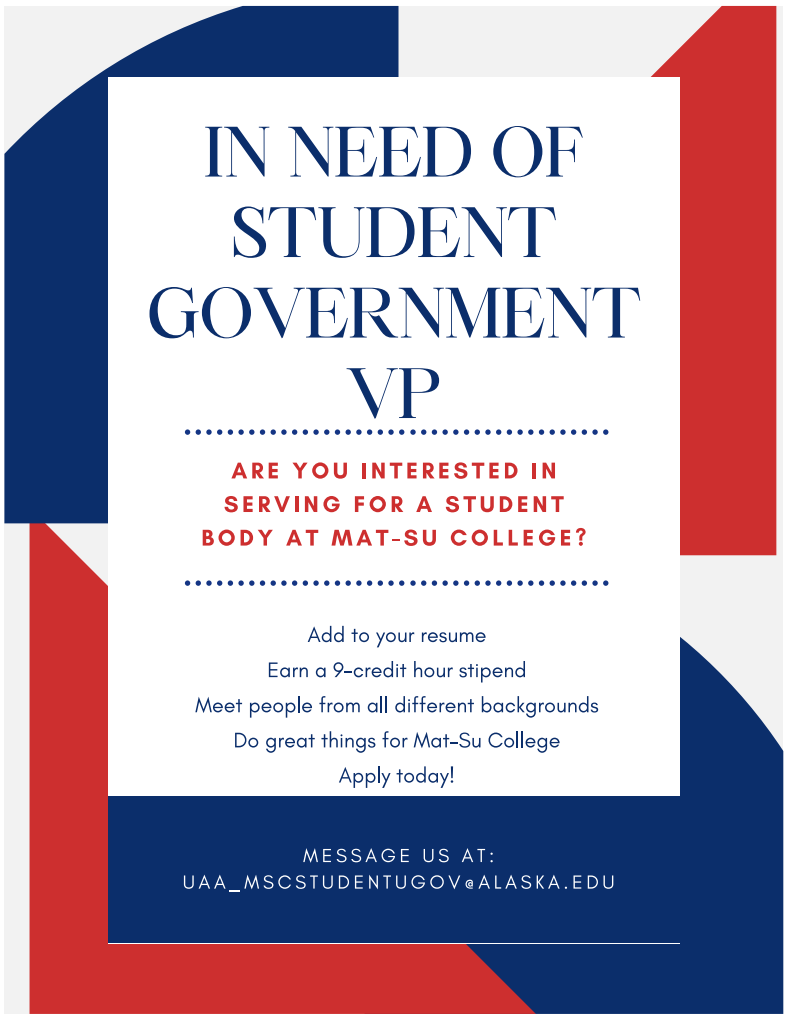
This created a massive obstacle. Half of everything we did was on campus, now it was closed to the public. Every class went online, Zoom was the new way of teaching college courses… yada yada yada. You all know the story, you lived through it. Due to campus being closed through the spring, there was not a whole lot to be done for us, unfortunately. On the bright side, at least Student Government will have more money to work with next year with the carry-over. It would have been a smooth transition, except for one thing. Due to Covid-19 and everything going digital, we were not prepared to have a spring election. The issue was that there are specific actions that must occur for an election to be held. One of these include posting flyers... around campus... advertising applications… crap. Nobody would have seen the flyers, let alone write the info down and turn it in. And an election with no candidates (while easy for the Elections Board) is counterproductive. At that point, the only option was to extend the positions of President Angeli Kristovich and Vice President Shane O'Quinn through Halloween of this year.

Student Government has had all their meetings through Zoom this year. Popping your head in, you will see students, staff and faculty laughing and passing action items like we were all in the same room as last fall. Between passing amendments to the Constitution, we laugh at Micah Muer's messy room he green screens in or be a captive audience to my dogs Perseus and Mabel as they bark at passing cars. It is both easier and harder in some ways to have student government meet only online. We do have senators (or senator for that matter, shout out to Arin Tampke) that come to the office, but with as much of a lack of in-person classes as we have, there isn't a good way to interact with students except through emails and through the website. Be honest, when was the last time you've checked your school email?

Student Government has had all their meetings through Zoom this year.

Another problem Student Government has faced is how do we plan events? We cannot have dances, concerts, or socials due to social distancing and mask regulations. Everyone has different interests so turnout might not be the biggest; there will always be time constraints, the list goes on. There may be some hope though. There was an average of 13 participants per Journey event in September 2020, and those were all virtual. Ideas thrown around included E-sports and starting up more clubs, and we try to come up with something new each week. I was almost thrilled when summer ended so I can talk to other humans again and see others' faces, but even now as I'm writing this there is this looming sense of cabin fever. Going out means the possibility of getting sick but staying in feels like you're grounding yourself for something you didn't do. I want to express thanks to those of you that attended the Journey events on behalf of the Student Government. We are working on stuff on our end and will get started as soon as the MSC election is over.

If you have any ideas for events you think MSC Student Government could pull off, email us at uaa_mscstudentgov@alaska.edu or call us at (907) 745-9759 and leave a message. We may not be on campus, but there is still a student body to govern. All we can do now is hope this plays out well, and I'm optimistic about it all.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The *Mat-Su Monitor* is the student newspaper of Mat-Su College. The *Monitor* aims to report college news and serve as a forum for student writing. The *Monitor* seeks submissions of news, editorials, and short fiction from all students, staff, and faculty of Mat-Su College. All students are invited to attend the *Monitor*'s weekly meetings. Details on participating in or submitting content to the *Monitor* can be found at *https://matsu.alaska.edu/monitor.*

The Mat-Su Monitor is funded by the Mat-Su College Student Government Association and our advertisers. For information on advertising in the *Monitor* contact Micah Muer at mwmuer@alaska.edu or 907-745-9758.

The opinions expressed the *Monitor* article are solely those of its authors. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy of the college, its students and employees, or the wider University of Alaska system.

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Micah Muer

# Online options for homework help

## Free, live tutoring help from Mat-Su College Tutors

As of October 2020, Mat-Su College only offers online tutoring. Using a local tutor is a good option because they have a good idea of the curriculum here.

The **math tutor** is available Monday through Wednesdays from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, and on Thursdays from 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM.

**Writing tutors** are available Monday through Thursdays from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

You can sign up for your tutoring session here: https://www2.registerblast.com/matsu/Exam/List

Check the Learning Resource Center webpage for updates on tutor availability: https://matsu.alaska.edu/offices/learning-resource-center

## Free, live tutoring help from Tutor.com

Thanks to funding from the State Library, Tutor.com Live Homework Help is available to all Alaska residents! This is a totally free service. There are tutors available from 8:00 AM to 2:00 AM every day of the week. Tutors can help with math, science, English, writing, reading, social studies, world languages, and much more. Tutors are available to help everyone from kindergarteners to college students. Tutors can even help non-students with things like citizenship tests, resume help, and tips for helping children with their homework.

You can interact with the Live Homework Help tutors in a few ways. The least interactive way is by using the "drop off" option. You can submit a math problem or paper. Then, when you have time, log back in to see what the tutors said. Otherwise you can work with tutors in real time by chatting or using a microphone. However you do it, you and the tutor can share a workspace so that you both see your paper or math problem.

To start using Live Homework Help, just go to https://lam.alaska.gov/sled/homework

## Other free, online learning resources

- Khan Academy (https://www.khanacademy.org). Many thousands of videos covering dozens of academic subjects. Suitable for all ages.
- Purdue OWL (https://owl.purdue.edu). A very useful guide to write papers in MLA or APA style, with examples of citations and paper layout.

### MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Play an important role on the Mat-Su College Campus. Being on a committee can help to enhance your career, give you a chance to give back to your community, and give you the opportunity to challenge yourself by helping to shape your society.

Current Mat-Su College Committees open to the student body:

| | |
|---|---|
| Board of Elections | Rules Committee |
| Concert Committee | Pizza Committee |
| Constitution Committee | Planning Committee |
| Dance Committee | Finance Committee |
| Health and Wellness Committee | |

Or join one of the student clubs. Clubs are a great place to meet like minded people, have fun, learn new things and relax. Many clubs are on pause during COVID-19, but some are still active, including the Mat-Su Monitor, the LGBTQ+ Club, and possibly others. See the college website for the latest details or email matsu.monitor@alaska.edu.

Joining a committee or club looks good on resumes as well as gives you a chance to connect with fellow students, staff and faculty. You owe it to yourself to try them out. If you don't see a club that interests you, you can start one of your own. Student Government will fund you up to $300 to cover expenses. You can pick up a form at the Student Government office in JKB 114, near the café.

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When?
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Why?
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What's in it for me?
Meet new people, earn extra credit, and win prizes. Have fun with Journey!
Check the Journey website weekly for full activity descriptions, updates, and new events. All Journey events are free. You'll want to sign upon the website for events requiring advance registration.
http://matsu.alaska.edu/journey/
Mat-Su College Journey activities and behavioral health care services for students are supported by a Healthy Impact Grant from the Mat-Su Health Foundation.

### CAMPUS LOST AND FOUND

**housed at the library**

**Missing your ...**

**Keys?**

**Phone?**

**Jacket?**

**Headphones?**

**Flash drive?**

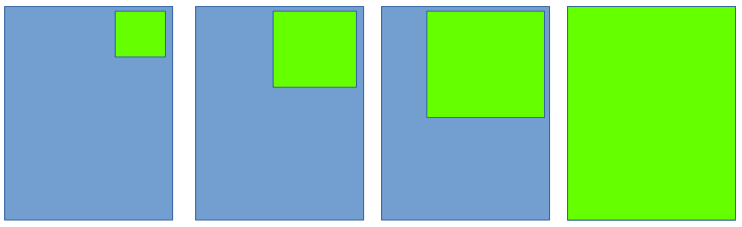
**Other item?**

**Just ask at the library desk -- your item might have been found!**

**Adventures** *from page 5*

**Dr. Seuss, Oh, the Places You'll Go!**

the end of a two hour drive or it may be a fifteen minute hike. Wherever it is, the main adventure is getting there and in the end it will be worth it. In the end there will have been a fun adventure, and a fantastic view, all adding together to form a beautiful memorable experience. As the wise Dr. Seuss once said, "Sometimes you may never know the value of a moment, until it becomes a memory." There are so many places to choose from. You can make those memories anywhere you want. So go on those adventures, go see those views and go make those memories!



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# Ordering Food

***By Angeli Kristovich***

When I go through a drive-through, or I am ordering food at a restaurant, sometimes I am picky. I will find what I want on the menu and change all kinds of stuff up on it, and not even think twice about it. Well, I have recently started working at a pizza shop that my husband and I bought and I learned a little something about ordering food, and what a picky order can do to the flow of a dinner rush. This is not to say that being a picky eater is bad, it's merely a peek through the stage curtain of a circus act we all know as, pizza.

I'm going to give an example of how a picky order reflects from the caller to the hostess, then to the cook, and sometimes the driver. When someone calls, and they have a friendly tone in their voice it can do wonders for the person taking their order. So, when they begin by saying, "okay, I want to order this, but I want to change it a little and I'm sorry!" At first, I think, "uh-oh, here we go", but since the person was nice, I can remain calm and write the order down neatly, which helps the cook, and in turn, helps the entire flow of a rush because if anyone knows about making a mistake, it can sometimes have a ripple effect where things go haywire for a few minutes until the atmosphere's chi is back at its normal vibration.

See, when someone thinks they are changing their order a lot, oftentimes they aren't, but the way they word it can be chaotic and wordy. Whether the caller is being nice or mean will make a big difference for the person who is taking the order and play a huge part in their critical thinking abilities at the time of the order. Having good critical thinking skills allows the phone person the ability to pick apart the chaos of your order to make the order easy for the cook, and possibly bring the price down by entering stuff incorrectly and finding deals for you that you may have not been aware of. Also, when the order is easy to read, it can be prepared quickly because the cook doesn't have to read a paragraph to get on with the show. And trust me, we want to get every single order right because God forbid we accidentally mess up an order and get a nasty review online (every restaurants' nightmare).

I have had people call, and they are in a rush and maybe having an awful day, so they are treating me like I am garbage on the gas station ground. They begin by asking me how long it will be (before even telling me what they will be ordering), knowing that no answer will suffice. Then they order a huge order and add or change stuff about everything they order. As they are ordering, my handwriting is like chicken scratch because my blood pressure is elevated. The person is super rude, and I can't be mean back to them because that's not good customer service and I just want the call to be over with already! Then, amidst all that, the other phone rings (because we have two lines), and I need to put them on hold because I am still working with the mean person. When it's all said and done, I tell the rude person their total, they get mad about the price, and hang up. After that, I bring the order slip back to the cook and have to explain to him what I wrote because it's so chaotic.

In a situation like I just mentioned, yes it is chaotic, and yes it isn't right of that person to be so mean, but after a couple of minutes goes by and the bad vibes are gone, I always realize that often when people are that mean to a stranger, they have other crap going on in their lives that has nothing to do with me or the wait time for their pizza at all. Often, I think that they find it easier to be mean to someone they are not standing in front of because when those same "mean" people from over the phone show up to pick up their pizza, their nasty attitude is gone, and they go on about their way. In my head, I'm thinking, "did our phone conversation mean nothing to you?! Was it THAT easy to be THAT mean?!" But I don't, I give them their pizza and don't say a word, so they can continue with their lives because it's those types of people who make up the diverse humans that we are. We have nice ones and mean ones. If we didn't have mean humans, we wouldn't know what nice was, so I want to say thank you to all those rude people out there. You make the nice ones stand out, and they make someone's day shine a little brighter because of them.

You know, sometimes I feel kind of immature and tacky for being offended by hangry people, but I can't help that I have feelings and I match energies with people. Sometimes I often feel like a parrot that mimics the vibes of the callers. If you are nice, I can feel it and the call goes great. But if you are mean, then things go wrong, and all of a sudden I forget where the buttons are in the computer which gives the impression to the already pissed off caller that I'm even more incompetent than

*See* **PIZZA** *page 10*

Barn-Owl-Viewed-from-the-Side (after van Gogh)
Marianne Elson-Griffith - Week 8 Master Copy

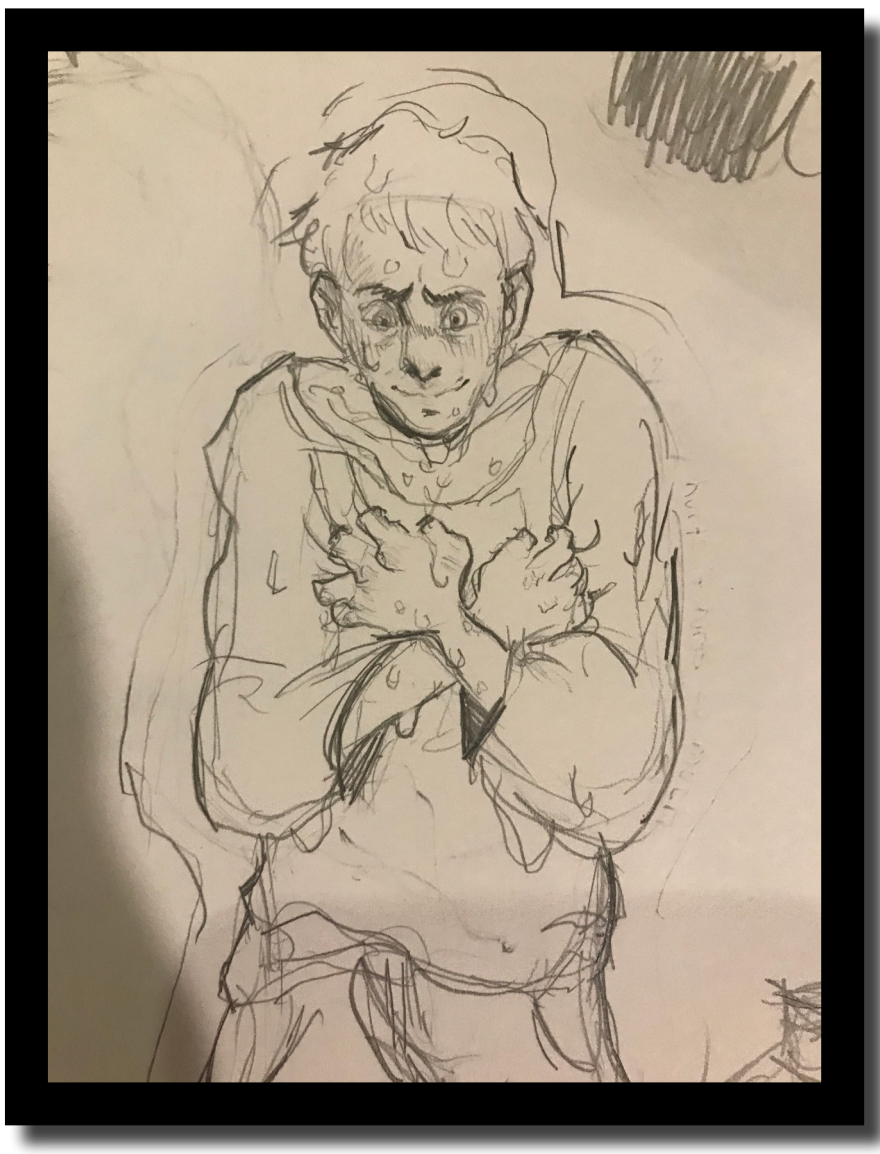
Tara Boyles

Sarah Clarke - Week 8 Int Dwg

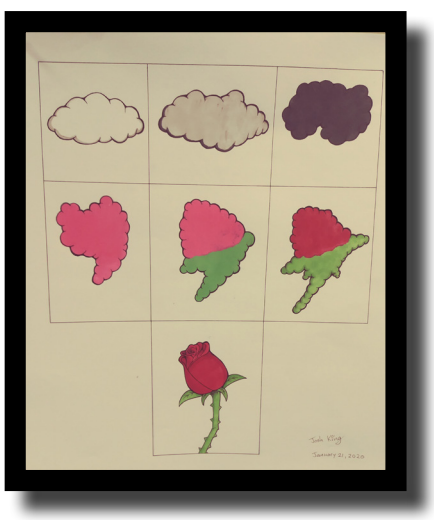
# FROM THE STUDIO

Art painting- Rachel Carpenter

Painting - Andrea Anders (After van Gogh - Wheat Field and Cypresses



Sarah Clarke Week 7 Int. Dwg 2020



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With classes, events, and social gatherings now being hosted in a digital space, our club is going online as well! With our meetings now being digital and accessible over the internet we'd love to be able to expand past the Anchorage campus and include our fellow UAA students at KPC, Mat-Su, Kodiak, PWSC and anywhere else students of the greater UAA community are doing their studies. You don't have to be an Anthropology major to join Anthropology club. We're looking for anyone and everyone who'd be interested. We have some fun online activities in the works for this year and are hoping to continue to make positive connections and friendships with members of our community. Interested parties should send us a simple email at this address: uaaanthroclub@gmail.com and we will give them the password for the zoom meeting.

MEETING TIMES

Thursdays
2:00 - 3:00
ZOOM

Looking For
- Photographers
- Writers
- Reporters
- Marketing Reps
- Cartoonists
- Artists

***Now taking submissions: Next deadline for entries: November 13.***

MESSAGE TO GAMERS AT MSC:
Are you interested in E-Sports?
Mat-Su College Student Government is in the works of starting up an e-sports group for college students. Do you want to be involved in the process?
ESTIMATED BEGINNING DATE: SPRING 2021
CONTACT US AT UAA_MSCSTUDENTGOV@ALASKA.EDU

# Let's go to the Club!

***By Angeli Kristovich***

Hello! My name is Angeli, and I am the current Student Government President here at Mat-Su College. I was supposed to be out of office last semester, but COVID-19 showed up and changed so much in such a little amount of time! We had to move the Student Government Elections to this semester (FALL 2020), so I volunteered to continue my term to see it through to the end. That way when the new President-Elect begins their term in office, they will have a little guidance from the one that preceded them, me!

So much has changed in the world since March, and it is great to see so many people sign up for classes this semester despite the chaos! College, and education in general, are gifts to yourself that you will have forever and no one can take it from you. It is truly amazing! As you already know, classes are mostly online, so that has made the campus environment a different place! To be more specific, it has made it very difficult for student-run clubs to be active here on campus.

What are clubs?

Simply put, clubs are defined at Mat-Su College as 5 or more students who have an interest in something, so they form a club. They can choose to meet up weekly or biweekly, to be around other people with the same interests. A few examples of clubs are the Math Club, the Alaska Native Cultures Club, and the LGBTQ+ Club. All of those clubs were very active on campus before COVID-19. It would be so great to see other clubs startup, but after a day that is full of zoom classes, and on your computer doing homework, it is difficult to host another meeting and to get people to show up to it! I know this from experience! But maybe you can help get students involved!

## Student Government Elections this semester

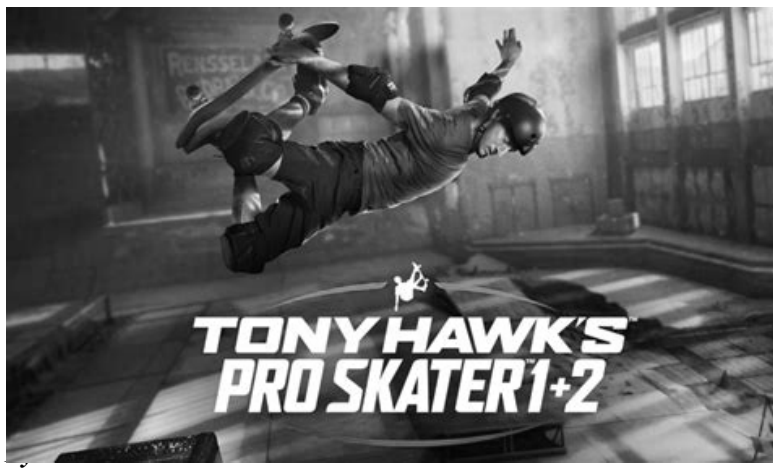
Although some people are just too busy with other stuff in life to get involved, there are also a lot of other people who don't have much going on and want to have something to do! I know this because I was one of those people! That's why I got involved with Student Government and the Alaska Native Cultures Club two years ago and I loved it. It was so fun being involved with planning events and getting people together! But now, with the safety guidelines in place, we need to think of safe ways to still have fun while we are in college.

Do you have creative ideas to start a new club amidst or new normal? Do you want to join the Student Government to try to help us with ideas to engage students safely? A couple of ideas that I have heard of are holding a drive-in movie for students! See, it's creative ideas like that, that will help us be able to keep our campus alive during this time when it seems so lonely! If you have any ideas for this semester that you think could spice up our daily grind of work, homework, and computer screens, let us know in Student Government, and we can work towards making that happen!

When we, in Student Government say that we are here for you, we mean it! So whether you have ideas for safe gatherings, ideas for enhancing student life, or you just want to be involved, I encourage you to join in on a Student Government meeting. You can brainstorm with us while we try to navigate these uncertain waters safely, while also trying to have a good time! If you are interested in anything I talked about or you just want to come to a meeting, email me at amkristovich@alaska.edu and I will send you the Zoom link invite. Student Government meets Wednesdays at noon via Zoom. We hope to see you there!

# Thoughts on Tony Hawk Pro Skater 1+2 Remake

## T-H-E-G-A-M-E-T-O-L-DOUBLE-O-K-A-T-I-N-T-H-E-T-W-E-N-T-I-E-S-APOSTROPHE-ESS.




I am not afraid to admit that I was very scared of the announcement that they were going to remake the first two Tony Hawk Pro Skater (THPS) games. I say this both because Tony Hawk Pro Skater 5 was a disaster, but they had already done it before with lukewarm reception. Tony Hawk's video game franchise has had a long list of games to its roster, and almost all of them have some unique quality to them. The first 3 THPS games were revolutionary in the extreme sports genre released alongside the snowboarding powerhouse SSX. THPS 4 had added new features and a loose story which led to the Tony Hawk Underground games (THUG), which then continued to manifest into intriguing and fun game later on: Tony Hawk's American Wasteland (THAW), Tony Hawk's Project 8 (THP8), and Tony Hawk's Proving Ground (THPG). It is around this point where many believed the franchise to drop off, as the studio behind the games Neversoft closed. Robomodo was a developer who made classics such as Tony Hawk's Ride and Shred, which could only be played with a Wii Balance Board look-alike skateboard. Robomodo also developed the first remake of the first two games (THPS HD), and THPS5. These games all performed miserably. With this in mind, I was hesitant when I found out they were going to do a second remake.

There were some good things that I saw which did lead me to pre-order the game: the developers were Vicarious Visions (ported Guitar Hero 3–6 for the Nintendo Wii as well as the Crash Bandicoot N. Sane Trilogy) and Beenox (who developed Crash Team Racing Nitro-Fueled). "Okay, good, this means that there are two companies with heads put on correctly." In addition, a lot of the same bands agreed to be licensed for the remake to be included in the soundtrack, 22 of them in fact. This means they have money to spend on making the game better. This is a definite change over THPS HD's measly 5 songs from the original 25 songs across both soundtracks. They also said they would include online multiplayer. This is a massive deal because playing online is more popularized in 2020 than in 1999 for... a decent number of reasons. At this point, I was hooked. I got the pre-order for $40 (which is a great price for a AAA game) and waited patiently for the game to open to the public.

The game plays very well. The game's graphics are updated so that the visibility of the level is higher. There are little changes to the mechanics or physics, and all of the goals and characters are there with extras included (well, except Private Carrera, but they do have a character customizer you can utilize!). Each level has 10 objectives and a 2 minute timer in which to complete them. Some levels can be finished in these 2 minutes. Some levels are extremely difficult and would rely on you going over the time limit by being in a combo when the timer hits zero. All of the levels, including THPS2's Chopper Drop and Skate Heaven, make a return and allow you to play to your heart's content. The game plays like THPS3 in terms of tricks and abilities. One of these include the "revert" move. After performing a trick off a ramp, you can turn your body and board around 180 degrees ("reverting") to continue your combo. You can then perform a manual– balancing on two wheels instead of four– after a revert and do other grind, flip, lip, or grab tricks until either your four wheels or your back/face touch the pavement. For you THPS vets out there. They also removed the "Big Drop" actions in the remake, which forced you to perform an action before landing a big jump. I'm happy about that too.

Something else they added are challenges that are outside of the level's objectives. These include speed runs, finding secrets in each level, performing a specific trick on a specific gap, performing a specific combo which include multiple gaps, getting stat points for each character, and so on. Each challenge has experience points associated and will bring you closer to the max level of 100. Reaching level 100 is a long and time-consuming process. I still haven't done it! But with a total of over 700+ challenges across the 21 (22 including your customized character) skaters, there is a lot of devotion to making the game a long haul as far as getting everything completed. Some can be a bit much, such as 10 cumulative hours in a manual or 100,000 cumulative grab tricks, but there is enough replay ability whether I'm just playing the game by myself, split-screen, or online that it doesn't matter.

Another one of my favorite parts of the Tony Hawk franchise is the music in the games. I would argue that about half of my music taste was formed because of the licensed soundtracks. THPS 1 and 2 presents 53 songs, including almost the entire soundtracks from the original 2 games. The 3 songs that couldn't make it were Unsane's "Committed" (which kills me immensely as a noise rock fan), The High and Mighty's "B-Boy Document" (which kills me immensely as a hip-hop fan), and Alleylife's "Out with the Old" (which… I can live without please don't yell at me). A lot of artists that made a pleasant return include Primus, Rage Against the Machine, Dead Kennedys, Fu Manchu, and Suicidal Tendencies to name a few. And yes, "Superman" by Goldfinger is in there. But they even added some new musicians to the mix as well and added some bands I will have playing even outside the game. Some of my favorites include: Screaming Females, Strung Out, Destroy Boys, A Tribe Called Quest, Billy Talent, Rough Francis, Sublime, and Viagra Boys. The variety of punk, metal, rock and hip-hop has always been a welcome surprise for the new games for me.

And to finish this piece off, I also want to state that there is THPS 3 DLC coming for the game, which is super exciting as this was the game that got me started. Perhaps this will lead to remakes of each of the games (yes, even THPS5 which came out in 2015) and create a new generation of players of the series. I am optimistic of the series' projection and look forward to seeing what is to come from Beenox, Vicarious Visions, and the Birdman himself.

# No Straight Roads – a musical journey riddled with potholes.

***By Arin Tampke***

Musical adventure No Straight Roads certainly got my foot tapping, albeit more due to frustration than the game's admittedly catchy tunes. Set in the music-obsessed metropolis of Vinyl City, No Straight Roads sees you play as two wannabe rock stars fighting against the dictatorship of NSR records, which not only mediates the city's musical tastes but also controls its power supply. The story picks up with rock bandmates Mayday and Zuke trying out for the Lights Up Auditions, a televised musical show not unlike American Idol. Despite their excellent performance, the judges of No Straight Roads – the label producing the show – tell them that the age of rock is over and that EDM is the new hotness. Mayday and Zuke don't take the rejection well, of course, and their anger is only further stoked when a later power outage in Vinyl City shows that NSR is using its power and influence to further their own ends, rather than those of the people. Galvanized, Mayday and Zuke set out to start a musical revolution to unseat NSR and prove how rock music can change the world.

No Straight Roads has what it takes to be a pop sensation, namely a strong sense of style and a good ear. Vinyl City is a dazzling neon sprawl divided into multiple districts, from the kawaii-colors and anime billboards of Akusuka, to the leafy groves and neoclassical architecture of Natura. These districts are controlled by powerful pop stars you need to face in battle, with victory bringing you one step closer to NSR's glittering skyscraper.

These battles are themed around different musical genres. In Akusuka, you take on an entirely digital K-pop star created and controlled by a group of geeky teens. In the Tron-like Metro District, meanwhile, you square off against a cybernetic boyband called 1010, whose chrome avatars are repurposed military robots. From an audio-visual perspective, these encounters are wonderfully designed. The vibrant and imaginative staging makes each unique and memorable. The accompanying soundtrack is fantastic too, cleverly fusing a wide range of styles.

It's a classical underdog story through and through, and No Straight Roads tells it with such earnestness and zeal that you can't help but become enamored with this strange musical world. Mayday's extremely hyper personality contrasts well with Zuke's cool and reserved demeanor, and it's fascinating to see how the two interact with all the larger-than-life personalities on their quest which also offers up some light commentary on real-world musical acts. For example, one of the earliest bosses you face is a clear homage to Hatsune Miku and other such Vocaloid programs, and Mayday struggles to understand how she's so popular when "she isn't even real!" Though the writing can sometimes stray a little too far into a campy, eye-rolling territory, there's hardly a moment where you don't see the heart and zeal that's been put into this story; it's abundantly clear how much love went into creating these characters and the world they live in.

To prove their relevance, Mayday and Zuke travel to various artists' venues to hijack their concerts, which usually leads to an enormous phantasmagoria of colors, lights, and pounding music as the two groups battle each other for control of the venue. Gameplay could be most closely described as a Devil May Cry-style beat 'em up, but with elements of rhythm games thrown in to keep things fresh. Enemies will often attack you to the beat, and though visual cues will also telegraph when the next attack is coming, you're best served by getting into the rhythm and dodging when the music dictates. It's all well and good in theory, then, but issues quickly arise when you begin to get into the weeds of how this gameplay setup is executed.

The first and most glaring flaw is the poorly-implemented camera, which is often just as much an enemy as the set-piece bosses you fight. In free roam sections, you're given full control of the camera, but this control is ripped away when you need it most for the boss fights. Here, you're instead treated to various fixed camera angles that make it difficult to judge depth

*See* **ROADS** *page 11*

**Pizza** *continued from page 5*

they already believed! Haha!

On the other hand though, when a nice person calls and orders a huge order, changes a bunch of stuff up, is happy and thankful for the nice service, it can make a huge difference. As mentioned before, I can write the order more clearly and pick apart the order to simplify it for the cook to be easily read, and the flow doesn't get a messed up. Because when the cook gets confused looking at a crazy order slip, the pizzas that are in the oven get forgotten about and if they are forgotten about, they have to be remade, then I have to make the call to the person that they will be receiving two pizzas because theirs was left in the oven for too long!

See, someone might be worried to say that sometimes their restaurant has had to remake an order, but we are human, and we have made some mistakes. But, we always make those mistakes right and people appreciate that about us! No matter what, when people get a pizza from us, they will be able to tell right away that the people involved in making their food care about what they are doing. Our ingredients are fresh, we make our dough in-house, and it is fabulous. The customer service that you will receive is classy and our food and service is tangible proof that we are here for you, the customer.

So, next time you or someone you know is ordering food, I suggest that they order nicely. The best food comes from a restaurant where the people are treated with respect and the atmosphere is friendly. We strive to make the service fast and can only go as fast as the food will cook. We don't want you to have to wait any longer than you should have to. And if you ever order from us, you will most likely be ordering from me, so be nice because I'm sensitive.

**My Summer** *continued from page 1*

life before quarantine happened, but now I have an excuse to be passive-aggressive. So, when my aunt told me to 'pack your bags, we're going to Fairbanks!' I was a mix of 'I don't want to leave my bed' and 'Finally a reason to get out of bed.'

I can't lie, I was more of the latter only because I'm a sucker for long drives. I was able to use my 5+ hour driving playlist! We made a couple of pit stops and I got some amazing pictures, but our end goal was Fairbanks, and it did not disappoint. We were blessed enough to get a room with a bad A/C, so we were upgraded to a room with the same price as our previous one. The hotel bed had me thinking 'I don't want to leave my bed' because the bedsheets felt like Heaven and 'Finally a reason to get out of bed' because I was somewhere new! No more staring at the artificial light screen that could potentially further ruin my eyesight! No more pixilated people and warbled voices, because using a Hotspot at home with bad connection does that. I was even able to wear something other than pajamas for a whole three days! Prior to the trip, I planned a whole itinerary, so I could squeeze as much as I could into three days. The Cookie Jar Restaurant is a place I highly recommend eating at if you ever stop by Fairbanks. It was a last-minute choice because the place I had originally chosen was closed but it was destiny. The Cookie Jar's breakfast was amazing, and that is an understatement. The people were so kind at every place we visited whether it was the mall, grocery store, or restaurant because eating was always on our mind when we were there. Maybe the kindness was out of obligation, but I felt obligated to give them a fat hug whenever someone complimented me or started a conversation, even if it was on shoes. No hugs occurred unfortunately because 'social distancing' is a thing. However, I did buy a hat at a shoe store because hey, there are no taxes in Fairbanks either! There was a nice tea shop called Sipping Streams that I kind of regret not purchasing at. I don't think I would use it, but it was a pretty tea-set. I did leave with a can of oolong leaves though. You can imagine my disappointment when the trip came to an end but man oh man, did I make the most of it. I was disappointed that the trip had ended but excited at the prospect of going back home. Yeah, I'll be stuck here until the quarantine is over but it's home. The place where I have belonged in my time of 17 years in Alaska. I'll complain and gripe like anyone can but at the end of the day, week, or month (depending on how spiteful I'll be) I'll be glad to have a place I can call mine.

**Procrastination** *cont. from page 1*

entire assignment and I "deserve" a break. It's crazy I tell ya. And even in the moment as I am picking up my phone, I have a moment of hesitation which is my conscience telling me that I don't need to be shopping online. Like, first of all, I'm broke. So, what am I shopping for? Nothing. I'm browsing, dude! Browsing is the ultimate time waster that has plagued my progress ever since I can remember.

I am one of the lucky millions of people on this earth who struggle with something called "High-functioning Procrastination Disorder." I just made that up, but I think it could be a thing. It's like when you have too much on your plate, but you get a lot done and try your best at everything you do, despite the fact that you get easily sidetracked. Yes, that is me. I will say though, that lately it has been even more of a struggle since classes became all online. See, usually, when classes are in person, I am able to get put back on track by being reminded of what I need to do next either from my peers while walking in the hallways, or from my professors during lecture. But now, I have no reminders, it's just me and my procrastination making the best of this world.

I have a plan that I am putting into effect as we speak, though. I got myself a planner, and I am checking Black Board more often. I also had a long talk with myself and asked myself what I want to do in life and if browsing for stuff I can't afford on Amazon is really the right choice when I am doing homework. I reluctantly replied to myself, "no." So, let's hope I make it through this semester intact.

**Letter** *continued from page 1*

Regent Garrett starts her ramble by acknowledging "You probably ain't eveh gonna get another letter like this… unless I send you another this year". And yes, she did purposely include those exact spellings. After pointing out the… uniqueness of the letter herself, the first part of the document details a long-winded introduction by the student regent. Often, she goes off on various tangents, all while making a variety of grammatical errors, and includes the occasional self-aggrandizing statement. Such statements for example include but are not limited to "I am unbreakable", "I am stronger than I ever knew", and "In fact I was made for this". Later she goes on to even boldly campaign for her own re-election efforts saying, "If you wish, you may send your senators and representatives your personal recommendation to confirm me in 2021 as your student regent."

Throughout the lengthy document, regent Garrett goes off on various tangents, often needing little reason to do so. On the third page she is quoted talking about her studies of tantra saying "(which is NOT about sex, people; this is a misguided belief many people have but it is not without reason)". Disappointing as that may be, I fail to see how tantric sex relates to the average UA student. Furthermore, on the fifth page of the document while discussing the extremely sensitive and emotional topic of suicide the student regent proclaims and requests in all capital letters "NO MORE SUICIDING", as if that statement would solve the issue.

However, in my opinion the most outlandish statement by the student regent regarded criticism of the university. Here she writes "It is at this point which I must express the urgency of ceasing ANY negative talk around our beloved university system". Here we have the student regent, an official that is supposed to represent student interests in the UA system tell the student body, to stop all criticism of the university. To begin, I will point out the sheer irony of that statement in and off itself. Regent Garrett's letter, whose topics range from casually bulldozing over the topic of suicide, to tantric sex, undoubtedly has only caused more controversy for the University of Alaska.

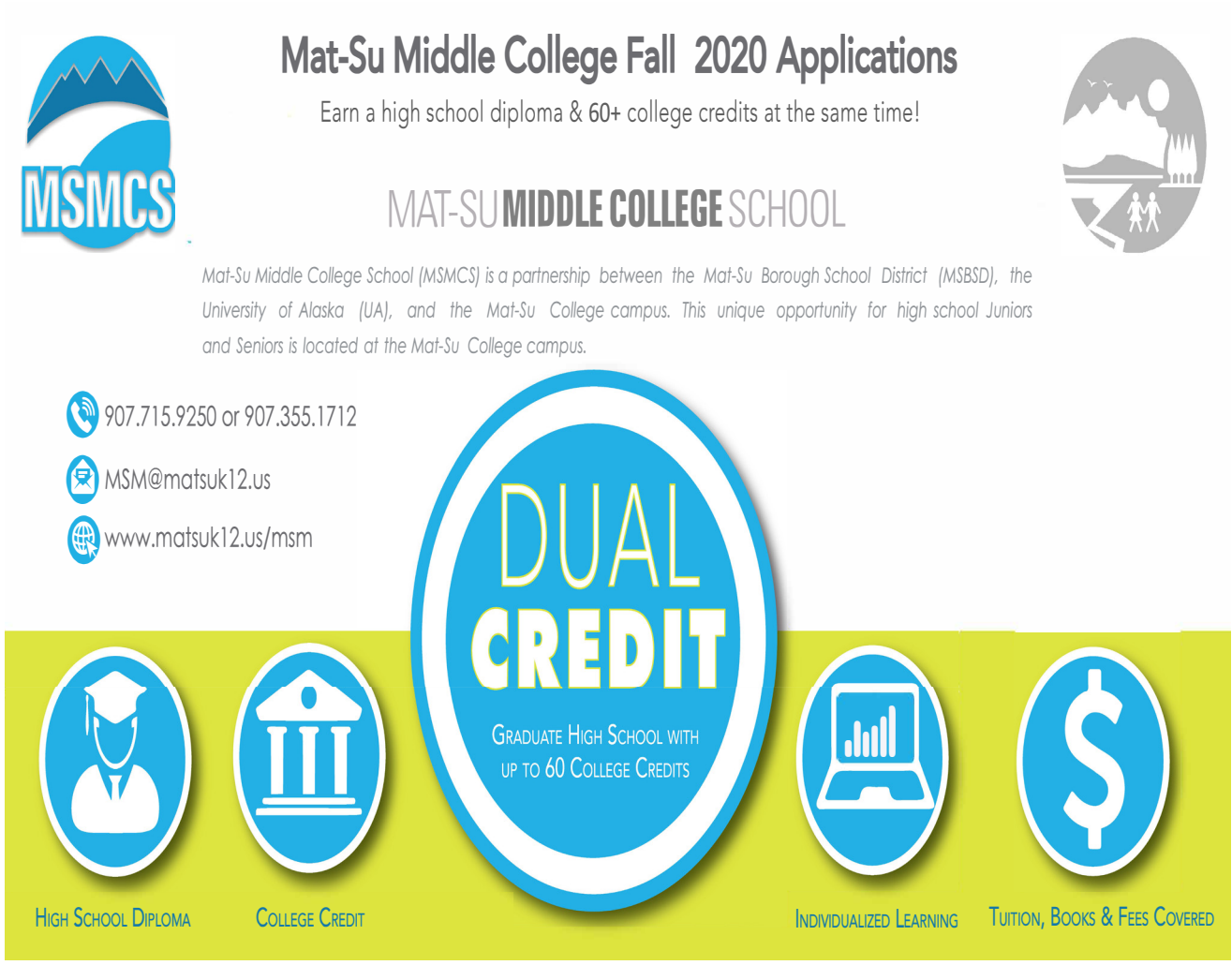
Secondly, this statement comes at a time when Alaska's university system faces unprecedented budget cuts, and hard choices that will ultimately affect the quality of education students receive. Yet, if student regent Garrett is to be believed, we are supposed to weather budget cuts, loss of programs, and forced online classes without complaint. As a university student, it makes me horrified to think that these are the thoughts of an individual that is supposed to represent the roughly 35,000 students spread across 19 campuses in the university system.

Overall, as a student at the University of Alaska, I find Regent Garrett's letter very troubling to say the least. The document's controversial statements make me question the regent's reasoning to send such a letter openly to the entire student body. Not only do I find her words in bad taste, but it has made me lose faith in someone who is supposed to represent others as well as myself. As university students, we must ask ourselves if this is the individual we want to represent and communicate our best interests to the Board of Regents during these important times.

**Community** *from page 1*

small time frame. Faculty members are now spending more time with each patient due to the increased number of precautions that have to be taken when performing medical tasks. This not only affects the number of patients that can be seen, but it also affects the number of hours staff are required to work in order to make sure all the patients are well cared for. These increased hours are exhausting, yet they continue to push on. In addition to this, these people are willingly putting themselves at an increased risk of getting infected with this virus. The dedication these members of society show is outstanding. They are putting so much effort into making sure our community continues to run, despite the difficulties they must overcome every day they walk through their facilities' doors. The patients who are going to these health facilities also have added stress put onto them and their families. They are required to follow the new rules just like the staff are. This can be very difficult when they are in pain and just want to feel better quickly. Having limitations on visitors can also make people very anxious and nervous. It is the staff's responsibility to ensure these patients feel welcome and well cared for.

This is just one example of how our community has had to change during this pandemic. Through it all we have remained strong and have continued to thrive. It is in times like these, that it is important to take into consideration what the people around us are going through and how we can make things more bearable for one another. By doing this our community can continue to grow closer together and create bonds that could last a lifetime.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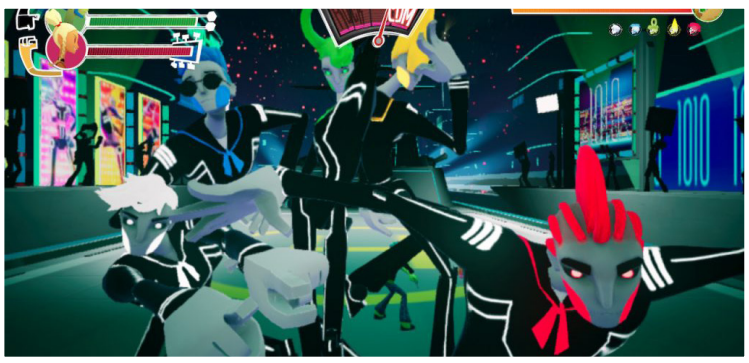
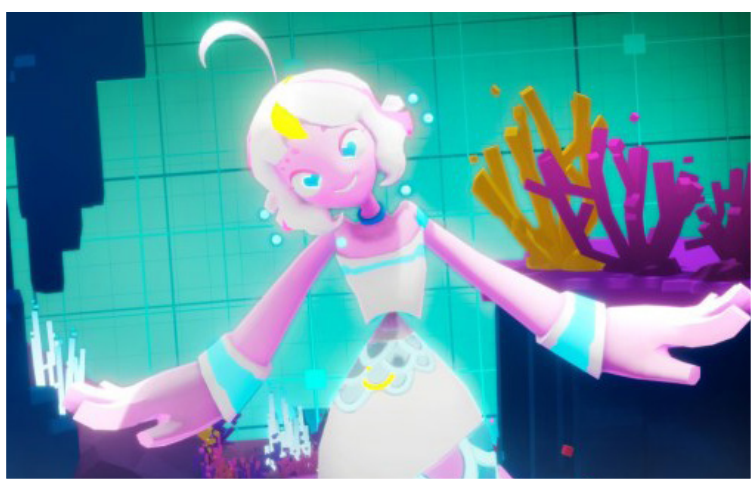
**Roads** *continued from page 9*

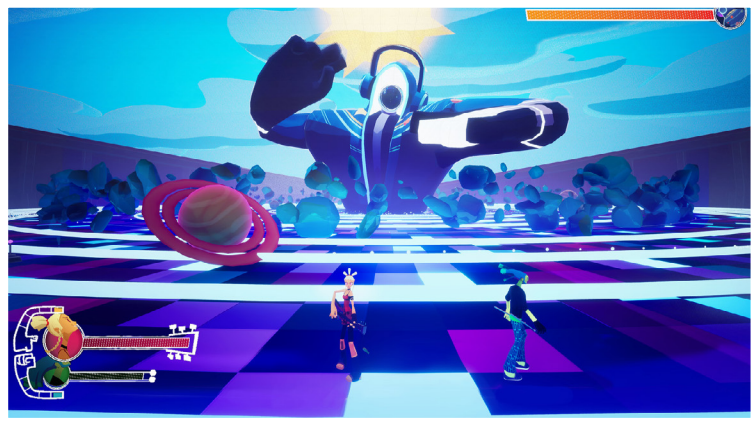


as you dodge attacks, and this matter isn't helped by the lack of an enemy lock-on feature to help land your blows. Sometimes bits and pieces of the environments can unintentionally obscure part of your view, too, making an already less than ideal camera set up even more frustrating. Most of the time it's okay, the camera is never bad enough to make No Straight Roads unplayable, but there's simply no excuse for such camera problems to crop up in a game released in modern times. Further issues then arise as the repetition begins to set in. Before most boss battles, you're first tasked with going through an 'approach' to the venue that adds next to nothing to the overall experience. These approaches consist of you enduring five or six extremely basic arena-style battles against a few robots, with some light platforming elements mixed in. Enemy and obstacle variety is exceedingly thin in these portions and the challenge is nonexistent, making it feel more like mindless filler than a meaningful palette cleanser between the big fights. Moreover, these portions highlight the relative shallowness of the combat system. Mayday is the tank-like heavy-hitter of the duo while Zuke is the lighter and faster combo master, but there's very little to differentiate the two's playstyles aside from a handful of swappable special moves that you can bind to the shoulder buttons. Having only one primary attack button also limits the depth and breadth of the potential attack combos you can pull off, meaning you're pretty much limited to spamming the 'Y' button while you watch the sparks fly. There's a basic skill tree that you can fill out to gradually buff up the duo's combat prowess over time, but this still doesn't do much to switch up the rather dull moment to moment gameplay. If you can get past those main issues with the camera and repetitive combat, however, you'll find that the boss encounters are pouring over with creativity and zest. Dodging music notes as you scale a skyscraper-sized rose reaching for the moon and jumping out of the way of planets being thrown at you from an intergalactic DJ are just a few highlights from the memorable boss fights, each of which has several phases that get more ridiculous the further in you go. Indeed, the boss fights are good enough that we wish the developers had focused on making No Straight Roads a boss rush game exclusively, as all the other extraneous elements only serve to drag the overall experience down.



The abovementioned filler sections are one offender in this regard, but another notable letdown is Vinyl City itself. This free-roam section proves to somehow be simultaneously confusing and barren, basically serving as something for you to spend a few minutes running across to get to the next boss venue. There are power cells liberally scattered around the environment like coins, but these only serve the purpose of helping you restore power to things like street lights and vending machines, netting you a few extra fans to help you fill out the skill tree further. Otherwise, there are also stickers to be found which you can slap onto your instruments to give them minor stat buffs, but this again feels like a contrived justification for why the free-roam segment is there.

Vinyl City also serves as a harsh reminder of the issues that No Straight Roads has with performance, as pop-in and slowdown are particularly rampant in this portion. Once you get into the limited arenas of the boss venues, these problems lessen considerably, but there are still one too many times where massive portions of the background suddenly phase into existence or some dropped frames cause you to miss a dodge. Oddly enough, performance seems to be much better in portable mode, where the 60FPS target is mostly adhered to, but the tradeoff is overall fuzzier image quality. If you can ignore the performance issues, however, No Straight Roads features a colorful and delightfully weird art style that seems to take a lot of inspiration from Psychonauts, and it's quick to lay on the charm.



We'd be remiss to discuss such a musically focused game without taking some time to focus on the soundtrack itself, which is simply excellent. Although there's an odd lack of rock songs for a game about an aspiring rock band, the mostly EDM-centric soundtrack is wonderfully produced and consistently keeps the pace moving at a brisk pace. Metronomik put a lot of care and attention into making each track thematically distinct for each boss while also adhering to the overall tempo of this often fast-paced release, and the presence of a few guest artists ensures that there's plenty of depth and variety to the tracks on display.

Conclusion: No Straight Roads isn't a bad game at all, but it's one that consistently falls short of the tremendous potential that it often hints at. The world, characters, music, and overall idea of its gameplay are ripe for a groundbreaking beat 'em up game, but this, unfortunately, is just a so-so one. Performance problems, camera issues, and repetitive gameplay are all factors that hold this one back from greatness, but these issues are often balanced out by the spectacular boss fights, excellent soundtrack, and charming writing. We'd recommend this one to beat 'em up fans looking for an interesting new entry in the genre, but with the big caveat that you consider this release's flaws before taking the plunge. It's certainly a worthwhile experience, but one that will likely disappoint if you come into it with the wrong expectations.

Mat-Su College
University of Alaska Anchorage

# Spring 2021

Open Registrations Starts
**November 26**
UAOnline.alaska.edu

**Instruction begins**

# JAN 11 2021

**To schedule an appointment for: Academic Advising, Financial Aid, or Career Assessments**
**contact Student Services at 907.745.9762**
**or visit matsu.alaska.edu**

2021-2022
# FAFSA
Application NOW Available!

## Need Help Applying?
Contact Student Services
TODAY!
907.745.9762

UA is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual.